United Nations A/57/79–S/2002/551

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
17 May 2002
English
Original: French

General Assembly
Fifty-seventh session
Item 68 (c) of the preliminary list*
Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 16 May 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the seventeenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was held from 22 to 26 April 2002 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (see annex).

The meeting made important recommendations and decided to hold its eighteenth ministerial meeting in Bangui, Central African Republic, in the second half of August, on dates to be determined.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 68 (c) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Atoki **Ileka**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/57/50/Rev.1.

02-38784 (E) 040602 040602

Annex to the letter dated 16 May 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the seventeenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

(Kinshasa, 22-26 April 2002)

Introduction

The seventeenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Kinshasa from 22 to 26 April 2002.

The following member States took part in the meeting: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe.

Rwanda did not attend.

Representatives of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) also participated in the work.

His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, presided over the opening ceremony which featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by General Lamine Cissé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Central African Republic and Director of the United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA);
- A message from the Secretary-General of OAU, read out by Colonel Mayell Mbaye, military official of the OAU liaison office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- A statement by H.E. Mr. Nelson Cosme, Deputy-Secretary-General of ECCAS responsible for peace, security and stability;
- The opening address by H.E. Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Advisory Committee commemorated its tenth anniversary on the occasion of the seventeenth ministerial meeting. This ceremony was presided over by His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Adoption of the agenda

The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Interim report of the Bureau by its Chairman.
3. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa.
4. Intergovernmental cooperation in security matters in Central Africa.
5. Evaluation of the implementation of the previous decisions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee.
   (a) Establishment of an early warning mechanism;
   (b) Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX);
   (c) Establishment of a subregional parliament;
   (d) Activities of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa;
   (e) Evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the

Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa;

(f) Evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa.

6. Consideration of the report of the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts.

7. Consideration of the report of the meeting of Central African chiefs of staff.

8. Date of the next meeting.

9. Other matters.

10. Adoption of the report of the seventeenth ministerial meeting.

11. Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

Conduct of work

I. Interim report of the Bureau by its Chairman

The Committee took note of the interim report of the Bureau presented by H.E. Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Committee welcomed the energetic and effective way in which the Bureau had discharged the mandates entrusted to it by the sixteenth ministerial meeting with regard, in particular, to the organization of the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts in Kinshasa; the organization of the meeting of the chiefs of staff in Libreville to review the Biyongho exercise; the raising of awareness among the countries of the subregion concerning the importance of signing the Mutual Assistance Pact and the Protocol on the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX); the organization of the seventeenth ministerial meeting and the steps taken with a view to the launching of activities related to the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa.

II. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

At the sixteenth ministerial meeting of the Advisory Committee, which was held in Kinshasa from 13 to 17 August 2001, it was decided to modify the presentation of the review of Central Africa's geopolitical situation and security. Henceforth, the Committee's secretariat would prepare a basic document to be considered by the members under the relevant agenda item. The secretariat assumed this task and presented a document which was considered and discussed by the members of the Committee.

As a result, the Committee formulated the following recommendations:

Angola

The Committee welcomed the positive development of the situation in Angola, in particular, the signature on 4 April 2002 of a ceasefire agreement between the Angolan Government and the União Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA).

The Committee commended the Angolan Government on its laudable efforts to create conditions that are conducive to the resumption of the peace process, national reconciliation and rehabilitation, particularly through the adoption, on 13 March 2002, of a fifteen-point declaration calling on the armed forces to cease all offensive movements beginning on 14 March 2002 in order to permit contacts with UNITA military forces, and indicated its intention to:

- Take the necessary measures to organize new elections;
- Take necessary action for the consolidation of peace and democracy in the country;
- Launch an emergency plan for the resettlement of displaced persons, reintegration of former combatants and veterans, war orphans and injured persons;
- Introduce a programme of reintegration of UNITA forces into the country's political life;

- Create the conditions necessary for the transformation of UNITA into a political party;
- Propose the adoption of an amnesty law for all crimes committed in the context of armed conflict with a view to national reconciliation;
- Launch a public investment programme aimed at ensuring economic reconstruction and rehabilitation of social and administrative infrastructure.

The Committee expressed concern at the humanitarian situation in Angola, in particular:

- The existence of a large number of displaced persons who, in fleeing combat, have been forced to abandon their belongings and means of subsistence and gather in urban centres where they face malnutrition and poor health coverage;
- The tragic deterioration of living conditions of the population in the zones which are inaccessible to humanitarian organizations.

It commended the Angolan Government's efforts to provide assistance to the displaced populations and facilitate access by humanitarian organizations to the needy, and encouraged the Government to continue those efforts, in particular with regard to the rehabilitation of infrastructure, the dismantling of transit camps, resettlement of displaced persons and delivery of humanitarian aid.

The Committee appealed to the international community to substantially increase aid to the Angolan Government to ease the suffering of its people who have been the victims of war, and to support the peace process. It proposed that activities aimed at the consolidation of peace, such as the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, reconstruction and economic revival, should continue to receive priority attention.

Burundi

The Committee expressed its deep concern at the deterioration of living conditions of the people of Burundi and the pervasive insecurity caused chiefly by the continued attacks against the civilian population and economic infrastructure by armed groups.

It hailed the efforts of the mediation team and some Heads of State to obtain a ceasefire and restore peace to Burundi, and encouraged the latter to continue those efforts in the context of the Arusha peace process.

It welcomed the progressive establishment of transitional institutions and expressed its support for the efforts of the Burundian Government and all Burundians engaged in the search for a lasting peace.

It invited the countries of the Central African subregion, particularly those of the Great Lakes region, to put pressure on the armed groups to conclude a ceasefire agreement, help the Burundians restore peace through dialogue and reconciliation and to refrain from providing any direct or indirect assistance to the rebels.

In that regard, it welcomed the high-level dialogue currently under way between Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, in particular, the terms of a joint communiqué issued after the visit of the Burundian Minister for External Relations and Cooperation to Kinshasa from 6 to 8 January 2002, which give legitimate grounds for hope that relations between the two countries will improve.

The Committee addressed an urgent appeal to all armed movements to immediately cease hostilities and join in the Arusha peace process and in good faith engage in negotiations for a total and early ceasefire.

It urged all the Burundian parties to promote national reconciliation and work towards the restoration of peace in Burundi, in order to permit the full implementation of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi.

The Committee urgently appealed to the international community and in particular to bilateral and multilateral donors to provide substantial support for the peace efforts and the improvement of living conditions for the people of Burundi, especially through effective implementation of commitments made in Paris and Geneva at donor conferences on Burundi.

Cameroon

The Committee paid tribute to the climate of peace and stability in Cameroon.

It welcomed the Cameroonian Government's pursuit of a policy of dialogue in the context of the establishment of a consensus-based democracy that will promote the country's harmonious development.

The Committee welcomed the Cameroonian Government's efforts to continue its campaign against crime and organized crime and to consolidate the gains in respect of human rights.

It welcomed the Government of Cameroon's policy of good-neighbourliness towards the other countries of the subregion.

The Committee was nevertheless deeply concerned at the information provided by the Cameroonian delegation on the content of a decision handed down in March 2002 by the Supreme Court of Nigeria, requesting the Nigerian Government and all physical and legal persons in Nigeria to provide political, financial and military support for the secession of the English-speaking party of the Cameroon.

In that regard, the Committee was vigorously opposed to any attempt to destabilize a country of the subregion and again invited the two countries to refrain from any action that could heighten tension pending the decision of the International Court of Justice, which Cameroon had seized of the matter relating to the land and maritime boundary between the Republic of Cameroon and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Committee, in addition to reiterating its appeal to the international community and friendly countries to assist in maintaining peace between Cameroon and Nigeria while awaiting the verdict of the International Court of Justice, requested the Court to take the necessary steps to ensure a rapid conclusion of the proceedings pending before it.

The Committee again urged Nigeria to comply strictly with the interim measures of protection laid down by the Court in its ruling of 15 March 1996 and called upon the two parties to refrain from taking any action that could create difficulties for the application of the final judgment of the Court.

The Committee invited the two countries to respect the verdict of the Court, whatever it might be, and welcomed the commitments undertaken by Cameroon in that regard.

Gabon

The Committee noted with appreciation the climate of peace and political stability in Gabon, the recent staging of legislative elections and the formation of a broad-based Government with full representation of the opposition.

It welcomed the holding in Libreville, from 18 to 21 March 2002, of the second regular meeting of the tripartite commission comprising Gabon, the Congo and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the increase in voluntary repatriation of Congolese refugees from Gabon and the decision taken by the three parties at the above-mentioned meeting to organize tripartite missions to the Congo and Gabon in order to make refugees aware of the advantages of voluntary repatriation and assist in the reintegration of returnees.

Equatorial Guinea

The Committee welcomed the climate of peace and stability in Equatorial Guinea.

It noted with satisfaction the continuation of the democratic process in Equatorial Guinea marked chiefly by:

- The normal conduct of activities of the political parties;
- The holding of statutory congresses by the opposition political parties with government funding;
- The review of the terms of the national compact on political dialogue between the Government and the political parties, which is an ideal framework in that regard;
- The adoption by Parliament of measures proposed by the Government within the framework of the implementation of the programme on good governance.

The Committee welcomed the resolution adopted by the Commission on Human Rights aimed at developing a programme of technical assistance by the Commission to strengthen national institutions for the promotion of human rights.

Central African Republic

The Committee expressed its concern at the precarious political, economic and security situation in the Central African Republic due largely to a series of national crises since last year, after the attempted coup d'état on 28 May 2001 and the November rebellion led

by the former Chief of Staff of the Central African armed forces, General Bozizé.

It welcomed the return to calm in that country and noted with satisfaction the measures of appeasement adopted by the Central African Government, as well as the efforts to fight insecurity, continue the process of restructuring the armed forces, including establishing a unified national army, and disarmament.

It welcomed the international community's efforts to promote political dialogue and encourage national reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

The Committee recalled that the prime responsibility for improving the situation in the Central African Republic rested with that country's sons and daughters and, in particular, with its political leaders. The Committee urged political leaders to place greater emphasis on dialogue, tolerance, national reconciliation, respect for human rights, democratically elected institutions and constitutional order in order to secure effective national reconstruction.

It appealed to the international community, and in particular to bilateral and multilateral partners of the Central African Republic, to provide substantial assistance in order to restore conditions that are conducive to the promotion of peace and sustainable development.

Republic of the Congo

The Committee welcomed the positive developments in the general situation in the Congo, characterized by the establishment of an inclusive national dialogue, an improvement in peace and security, the gradual return of refugees and displaced persons, the continuing collection of military weapons, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and the holding on 10 March 2002 of a presidential election recognized by international observers to have been free and transparent.

It was nevertheless deeply troubled by the recent attacks carried out in the country by armed militias, which were endangering the peace re-established after so many years of fratricidal clashes that had left many families bereft and caused considerable destruction.

The Committee also expressed concern at the difficulties encountered by displaced persons fleeing from recent hostilities, and appealed to the international community, in particular the humanitarian agencies, to provide substantial assistance to the people in need.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee welcomed the signing of the political agreement on consensual management of the transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo concluded on 19 April 2002 by the Government, the Mouvement de libération du Congo (MLC) and the other participants of the inter-Congolese dialogue held in Sun City, South Africa, and called on parties who had not been signatories to join the process under way.

It expressed grave concern at the continued infringements on the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular the recent confrontations in the area of Moliro and in the Kivu provinces, the reported troop movements in the eastern part of the country, in violation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, the Kampala plan and the Harare sub-plans, and the clashes involving rebel forces and other armed groups in the eastern and north-eastern parts of the country.

It asked the parties which have not yet done so to complete their withdrawal to the new defensive positions in accordance with the Kampala plan and the Harare sub-plans for disengagement and redeployment.

The Committee asked all countries with troops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to make appropriate necessary arrangements for a prompt, complete and orderly withdrawal in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions, so as to restore the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of that country.

It asked all parties involved to make all necessary arrangements with a view to achieving the prompt demilitarization of the town of Kisangani in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and with decisions taken by the Political Committee of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement at the meeting held in Lusaka on 20 March 2002.

The Committee welcomed the new concept of operations of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), as proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and asked the Security Council to accelerate the deployment of MONUC to the East of the

Democratic Republic of the Congo under phase III of its mandate.

The Committee expressed its grave concern at the continued systematic plundering and unlawful exploitation of natural resources and other riches in the occupied part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and demanded the immediate cessation of those practices.

It expressed deep concern at the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and at the grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law perpetrated in the occupied part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Committee urgently appealed to the international community to continue its support for the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to provide substantial assistance to the people affected by the war, and to respond generously to the worldwide appeal on behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for 2002 launched on 27 November 2001 by the United Nations and its humanitarian partners. It also asked all parties to take the necessary measures to allow humanitarian organizations secure, unimpeded access to the people in need.

Sao Tome and Principe

The Committee welcomed the climate of peace and stability in Sao Tome and Principe and the strengthening of the democratic process as reflected in the recent presidential elections which led to the creation of a coalition Government.

It noted with satisfaction the significant number of women taking part in the new Government and welcomed the policy of good-neighbourliness of the Government of Sao Tome and Principe towards the countries of the region.

Chad

The Committee welcomed the strengthening of the democratic process in Chad, characterized by the holding of legislative elections in April 2002 and the progressive, effective creation of judicial structures.

The Committee encouraged the Chadian head of State, H.E. Mr. Idriss Déby, to persist in his efforts to bring about a dialogue with the various opposition movements.

It commended the efforts made by the Chadian Government to maintain its contacts with political exiles and to hold a dialogue with the various political groups. It welcomed the peace agreement concluded in Tripoli on 7 January 2002 between the Government and the Mouvement pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad (MDJT).

It invited the Chadian Government and MDJT to do their utmost to implement the terms of that agreement, in the interests of the Chadian people.

The Committee urged the authorities of countries hosting Chadian political exiles to play a greater role in the dialogue under way in Chad, with a view to facilitating their return to the country.

It welcomed the recent visit to N'Djamena of the head of State of the Central African Republic, H.E. Ange Félix Patassé, which helped to ease the political strain between Chad and the Central African Republic and encouraged the two countries to persist in their efforts to find a definitive solution to the Bozizé affair.

III. Intergovernmental cooperation in security matters in Central Africa

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the intensification of actions and initiatives taken by the member countries within the framework of cooperation in security matters, aimed, in particular, at lessening tensions, combating insecurity in the border areas and facilitating exchanges between the various national structures dealing with these questions.

In view of the cross-border nature of most of the security problems in the subregion and the need to respond to them in a joint and concerted manner, the Committee again strongly recommended continued cooperation and dialogue among the security forces of the Central African countries, particularly within the framework of periodic meetings and the organization of joint operations.

The Committee particularly welcomed:

- The meeting held in Kinshasa from 6 to 8 January 2002 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi and the

Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which resulted in the publication of a joint communiqué containing important commitments which held high hopes for the development of cooperation between the two countries on the issue of security;

- The meeting in N'Djamena between President Déby and President Patassé, which eased the relations between the two countries and diminished tension at the borders;
- The establishment in Cameroon of several regional vocational training centres for judicial police, defence, peacekeeping and security;
- Tripartite ministerial meetings held, since August 2001, among Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo, with persons responsible for security matters, and concerning cooperation between those three countries on border security, in particular, the introduction of single passes and visas;
- The organization of joint river patrols between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo;
- The cooperation between Chad and the Central African Republic in curbing roadblocks;
- The visit of the President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, H.E. Fradique Melo Bandeira de Menezes, to Equatorial Guinea;
- The organization of joint border patrols by the security forces of the Central African countries;
- The coordination meetings between the administrative and military authorities of the border areas to dispel tensions among the population and to build confidence;
- The summit meetings on security questions held by the Central African countries at the bilateral and multilateral levels

The Committee expressed its deep concern with regard to the persistence of organized crime and insecurity in the countries of the subregion, particularly the development of the phenomenon of roadblocks. It recommended the intensification of information exchanges and the organization of large-scale joint operations to combat this scourge. It recommended that a high-level meeting should be held on the question, aimed, in particular, at setting up a suitable legal framework for cooperation in the matter.

It stressed the need for closer cooperation among the security forces of the various countries with a view to combating the cross-border trade in stolen vehicles.

Recalling the importance to the subregion's peace and security of the protocol relating to the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) and the Mutual Assistance Pact concluded in Malabo in February 2000 among the countries of Central Africa, the Committee recommended that the Bureau should draw the attention of those countries which had not already done so to the need to sign and/or ratify those instruments.

Aware of the need to strengthen cooperation for peace and security in the subregion, the Committee appealed to those countries that had not yet signed the agreement on criminal police cooperation, adopted in April 1999 at the meeting of the Committee of Central African Police Chiefs in Yaoundé, to take all necessary steps to expedite the signing of this text and to guarantee its full effectiveness.

IV. Evaluation of the implementation of the previous decisions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee

A. Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX)

The Committee asked countries that have ratified the texts governing COPAX and the Mutual Assistance Pact (Cameroon, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea) to transmit the relevant instruments of ratification to the depositary country, Gabon, and urged countries that had not yet done so to take the necessary steps to ratify those legal instruments before the next ministerial meeting.

With respect to the early-warning mechanism for Central Africa (MARAC), the Committee took note of information supplied by the Deputy Secretary-General of ECCAS concerning:

- The adoption of a budget for the establishment of COPAX;
- Discussions with the European Union on the financing of a support programme for MARAC and for various peace and security initiatives under the ninth European Development Fund (EDF) of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)-European Union (EU) agreements;
- Discussions with the French authorities with respect to assistance under the Reinforce African Peacekeeping Capacities (RECAMP) project.

The Committee took note of information provided by the secretariat on the proposal by the Department of Political Affairs for one of the member countries to launch a MARAC pilot project that other member countries could emulate.

The Committee took note of information supplied by the Deputy Secretary-General of ECCAS on a study under way on the early-warning mechanism which would facilitate an evaluation of costs and of implementation modalities.

It asked the Secretary-General of ECCAS to present that study to the next ministerial meeting.

B. Commencement of activities at the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

The Committee welcomed the commencement of activities at the Centre and took note of the communiqué submitted by H.E. Teferra Shiawl-Kidanekal, Director of the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa.

In particular, it welcomed:

- The signing on 12 September 2001 of a headquarters agreement for the Centre between the Government of the Republic of Cameroon and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;
- The assumption of office by the Director of the Centre on 13 March 2002;
- The carrying out by the Centre since its inception of diverse activities in the following areas: training, technical cooperation, public information and the development of partnerships for the promotion of human rights.

The Committee commended the Cameroonian Government, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General of ECCAS for their successful joint efforts to establish the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa.

C. Establishment of a subregional parliament in Central Africa

The Committee welcomed the setting up of the network of Central African parliamentarians, whose headquarters will be located in Malabo.

The Committee took note of the information provided by the secretariat of ECCAS with regard to the meeting of Central African parliamentarians held in Luanda in March 2000, and the meeting of Central African women parliamentarians on peace and security held in Libreville, from 21 to 23 April 2002.

The Committee noted with satisfaction that Equatorial Guinea has renewed its commitment to host that institution.

V. Consideration of the report of the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflict in Central Africa

The Committee took note of the report of this Conference, which was held in Kinshasa in November 2001, and proceeded to its adoption.

Recognizing that women and children are the principal victims of armed conflicts and that they play a major role in the quest for solutions to such conflicts, the Committee recommended to member States that they should include them in delegations to its various meetings.

It urged States hosting such meetings to include women and youth in their delegations.

VI. Consideration of the report of the meeting in Libreville of the chiefs of staff of the Central African countries

The Committee reiterated its commitment to organizing, in cooperation with ECCAS, a joint military exercise to simulate peacekeeping operations involving the armed forces of its member States.

The Committee received the report on the meeting of the chiefs of staff of the Central African countries, who rethought the Biyongho-2003 military exercise. The meeting was held in Libreville from 18 to 20 March 2002 and the report was adopted. The Committee welcomed the fact that it had proved possible to cut the cost of the exercise from 2 billion CFA francs to about 800 million.

The Committee confirmed that Gabon would be the host country for the exercise. It also recommended that Gabon should lead the exercise, in the interest of consistency in the execution of missions, and entrusted the following tasks to Gabon:

- To chair the meetings of the planning committee;
- To manage operations in relation to Biyongho-2003;
- To carry out an awareness campaign targeting all the Governments of the region in order to ensure their effective participation in the exercise;
- To encourage all member States to provide to the operation the necessary logistical means needed for the execution of projection missions;
- To ensure that the exercise is conducted successfully.

The Committee welcomed the decision by the Government of Gabon to contribute 200 million CFA francs pursuant to the correspondence addressed to the Secretary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

The Committee agreed on the following distribution of the costs of the exercise:

- Gabon: 200 million CFA francs;
- Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea: 400 million CFA francs in total, 80 million from each country;
- Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Sao Tome and Principe: 200 million CFA francs, 50 million from each country.

The Committee requested that an advance payment of one tenth of the amount of each country's contributions should be paid by 1 August 2002, the remainder to be paid to Gabon on 2 April 2003.

The Committee fixed the dates of the planning conferences as follows:

- Monday 2-Friday 6 September 2002: first planning conference in Libreville and Franceville;
- Monday 3-Friday 6 February 2003: second planning conference in Libreville and Franceville;
- Monday 7-Sunday 13 April 2003: third planning conference in Libreville and Franceville.

The Committee selected the following dates for the various phases of the exercise:

- Tuesday 10 Friday 13 June 2003: CPX (command post exercise);
- Saturday 14-Wednesday 18 June 2003: FTX (field training exercise);
- Wednesday 18-Saturday 21 June 2003: debriefing and tear-down.

The Bureau was mandated to request United Nations technical support for operations relating to the "buildup" and request ECCAS to take all necessary measures to obtain additional material support from donors.

VII. Special recommendations

(a) The Committee requested ECCAS to organize, with assistance from the Committee secretariat, a workshop on the implementation by ECCAS member States of the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July 2001 at New York. The Bureau was mandated to monitor developments in this area and to report on them to the Committee at its subsequent meetings.

(b) The Committee decided to invite the Department for Disarmament Affairs to take part in the eighteenth ministerial meeting in order to give a

presentation on the objectives of the United Nations register of conventional weapons and of the reporting of military expenditures.

(c) The Committee noted with interest the information provided by the Secretariat on the willingness of the Department for Disarmament Affairs to assist member countries for the following:

- Operations to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants;
- Collection, storage, management and destruction of weapons;
- Capacity-building for training and in institutional matters;
- Organizing seminars on cooperation between civilians and the armed forces.

The Committee also took note of procedures for the submission of requests for such assistance and appealed to the Secretariat of the United Nations to ensure that such requests from members of the Committee were examined with diligence and on the basis of objective and transparent criteria.

(d) The Committee recommended that the New York representative of the Bureau should hold regular meetings with the representatives at the United Nations of the countries which are members of the Committee so that they can be quickly informed of decisions taken at ministerial meetings.

(e) The Committee welcomed the holding in Libreville from 11 to 15 March 2002 of the subregional meeting on trafficking and exploitation of children, sponsored by ECCAS, UNICEF and the International Labour Office, and requested that it should be followed up in the context of the elaboration of a subregional convention.

(f) To contribute to the fight against impunity in the subregion, which is one of the basic factors in situations where international peace and security are broken, the Committee decided to hold a seminar of experts from the subregion in order to harmonize national policies in relation to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

(g) The Committee requested member countries which have not yet done so to create national committees to follow up its decisions.

VIII. Date of the next meeting

The Committee decided to hold its eighteenth ministerial meeting in Bangui, Central African Republic, in the second half of August 2002, on dates to be determined.

IX. Other matters

The Committee urged member States to make regular contributions to the trust fund intended to finance its activities.

X. Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Committee

During its seventeenth ministerial meeting Ministers and heads of delegation celebrated the tenth anniversary of the creation of the Committee.

Ministers and heads of delegation adopted a solemn declaration, which is annexed to the present report, recalling the importance of the Committee as a framework for cooperation and for the elaboration of confidence-building measures among the Central African countries. They thanked the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the international community for their assistance to the Committee and reaffirmed their commitment to work resolutely for effective application of the Committee's resolutions and decisions.

* * *

Lastly, the participants welcomed the favourable climate that had prevailed throughout their deliberations and expressed their appreciation to the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, H.E. Major-General Joseph Kabila, and to the Congolese Government and people for the warm welcome and fraternal attentions paid to them during their stay in the Democratic of the Congo.

Kinshasa, 26 April 2002

Annex

Kinshasa Declaration by Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the member countries of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Meeting at Kinshasa on the occasion of the seventeenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa,

The Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the member countries celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Committee on 26 April 2002.

Having evaluated the Committee's activities during its first 10 years, they welcomed the existence of the Standing Advisory Committee, a framework for cooperation for peace and security in Central Africa, and warmly thanked the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the useful initiative which had made possible, inter alia:

(a) The establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa;

(b) The establishment of the network of parliamentarians in Central Africa;

(c) The creation of the Central African early warning mechanism and of the Central African multinational force;

(d) The conclusion of the Mutual Assistance Pact and of the Protocol relating to the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX).

In that regard, they request States which have not yet done so to ratify as soon as possible the Mutual Assistance Pact among the States of Central Africa and the Protocol relating to the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX).

Aware of the importance of the recommendations adopted by the Committee over the past 10 years, they reaffirm their commitment to:

- Strengthen the activities of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), particularly those concerning the promotion of peace and security in the subregion;
- Implement the programme of action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held at New York in July 2001;
- Implement the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa, held in N'Djamena in October 1999;
- Implement the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa, held in Bujumbura in August 2000;
- Implement the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts, held in Kinshasa in November 2001; and
- Pay their contributions to the trust fund established to finance the activities of the Committee.

The Ministers and heads of delegation also reviewed the geopolitical and security situation in the subregion.

In that regard, they express their serious concern regarding the situations of armed conflict persisting in the subregion owing, inter alia, to non-compliance with certain principles contained in the Charters of the United Nations and of the African Union, including:

(a) Non-interference in the internal affairs of States;

(b) Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every State;

(c) The peaceful settlement of disputes; and

(d) The inviolability of internationally recognized borders.

They reaffirm their determination to promote good-neighbourly relations and respect for the aforementioned principles.

Considering the particular situation prevailing in certain countries representatives on the Committee, particularly Angola, Burundi and the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, they welcome the positive developments in those countries.

Concerning Burundi, they welcome the establishment in November 2001 of the transitional Government arising out of the Arusha Peace Agreement, and urge armed groups to join the other parties in the current peace process.

As for Angola, they welcome the conclusion on 4 April 2002 of a ceasefire agreement between the Government of Angola and UNITA. They also commend the Government of Angola for its decision to grant an amnesty in order to promote national reconciliation.

Concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, they welcome the signature of the political agreement on consensual management of the transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which was concluded on 19 April 2002 between the Government, the Mouvement de libération du Congo and the other components which took part in the inter-Congolese dialogue held in Sun City, South Africa, and urge the non-signatory parties to join in the current peace process.

They call upon all parties involved in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to comply with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

The Ministers and heads of delegation express their appreciation to the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, H.E. Major-General Joseph Kabila, and to the Congolese Government and people for the warm and fraternal welcome they received while staying in their very beautiful country.

Kinshasa, 26 April 2002